**Infectious disease in the workplace policy**

# Purpose & Scope

Footprints CEC has developed this policy on minimising the risk of infectious diseases spreading in the workplace through effective prevention and management.

The policy seeks to ensure that employees are aware of the issues relating to infectious diseases at work and provides guidelines for managers and others on minimising the risk of employees/visitors contracting diseases through work/visits to site and on dealing with infections if contracted.

This policy applies to all employees, agency workers, trustees, ambassadors and volunteers.

# Business Case

Infectious diseases emerge and spread quickly across the world as a result of global travel and other interconnections. Workplaces are an effective incubator for disease, particularly if hygiene and infection control is poor or if employees go to work when sick.

Infectious diseases can have a potentially significant impact on service provision and business for the Charity. An employee off sick with flu-related illness is typically absent for six days. As well as the direct costs of infection-related sickness absence, there are also indirect costs associated with the loss of productivity, poor service levels or cancelled services.

# Minimising the risk of disease transmission

Footprints CEC has a duty of care to maintain a healthy and safe working and visiting environment. This includes taking steps to minimise the risk of employees contracting an infectious disease from colleagues, families, service users and other visitors to the centre.

Footprints CEC will promote awareness and understanding of the issues and concerns relating to the transmission of infectious diseases in the workplace, including the risks associated with more serious infections such as measles and mumps.

To this end, the organisation will provide authoritative information on the nature and spread of common infectious diseases, including how to identify the symptoms and signs and the procedures to be followed in the event of individual illness or an outbreak affecting a significant number of employees.

# When employees have contracted the disease

Employees with infectious diseases will not be excluded from work, nor have their duties restricted, as long as they are physically and mentally fit for work and their continued attendance in the workplace does not present a significant risk of disease transmission to other employees, customers or clients.

The decision as to whether or not an employee with an infection should stay away from the workplace will take into account:

* how the infection is transmitted and the ease of transmission;
* the typical duration of the infection; and
* the potential harm that the infection can cause to other employees, families, service users and other visitors to the centre; and
* any government guidance and guidelines appropriate at the time.

Employees have a responsibility to minimise the risk of disease transmission to work colleagues, families, service users and other visitors to the centre and are expected to perform good hygiene control measures and use personal protective equipment where provided.

In the instances of infectious diseases such as Covid-19 where testing is available to confirm an illness, and will assist the employee in making a decision on whether to stay away from the workplace or not, the employee can seek the relevant test and an expense claim can be raised for reimbursement of the cost incurred.

# Standard Hygiene Practices

Footprints CEC will develop routine procedures for hygiene control, taking into account professional guidelines and advice from statutory bodies, such as the Department of Health and Health Protection Agency.

Footprints CEC will take steps to raise employees’ awareness of these procedures through education, training materials and induction sessions.

Employees are encouraged to adopt effective hand hygiene practices and to sterilise shared kitchen utensils where appropriate.

# Personal Protective Equipment

Employees issued with personal protective equipment to minimise the risk of work-related infection should use it appropriately and clean their hands immediately after removing items such as gloves and facemasks.

Requests for wearing Personal Protective Equipment from those visiting the centre will be reviewed on a request by request basis and decisions on the actions to be taken made thereafter.

# Disease outbreak

In the event of a disease outbreak affecting a significant number of employees, a working group of line managers and trustees plus other designated individuals will be formed to monitor and coordinate activities to control the outbreak. The work of this group will include developing work rules in the event of an outbreak including exclusions/restrictions from work and the reassignment of duties. This group will also have responsibility for closing the service and notifying all parties concerned of this decision if necessary.

# Notifiable diseases

In addition to the above, any notifiable diseases must be notified. Notifiable diseases can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/notifiable-diseases-and-causative-organisms-how-to-report#list-of-notifiable-diseases>

In order to ensure that all relevant reports are made, any occurrence of a notifiable disease should be notified to the manager of the charity.

# Reference documents

Absence Management Policy

Personal Protective Equipment Policy

Employee Handbook

# Changes to this policy

Footprints CEC aims to meet high standards and so the policies and procedures are constantly under review. From time to time we may change this policy.